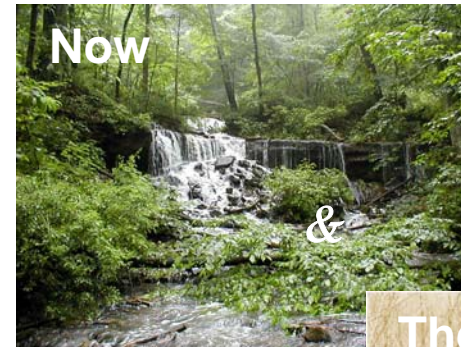


Notes

Sketches



Leonard Springs Nature Park

A self-guided tour

*Celebrating 10 years as a City park
(1998—2008)*



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
parks and recreation

Notes



References and Directions to Park



Center for Watershed Protection

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Indiana Karst Conservancy

Indiana Geological Survey

Leonard Springs Nature Park Interpretive Plan, Interpretive Ideas, Bloomington, Indiana. 1998

Monroe County Historical Society

Monroe County

National Speleological Society

Project Underground

The Subterranean Fauna of Leonard Springs Nature Park (Monroe County, Indiana), Julian J. Lewis, Salisa T. Rafail, J. Lewis & Associates, LLC

Illustrations and non-historic photos (except those on interpretive signs), Kriste Lindberg

Special thanks: Bloomington Indiana Grotto, Steve Clark, The Herald-Times

Directions: From downtown Bloomington, travel west on Second Street. Second Street will become Bloomfield Road. Just after you pass over SR 37 and by Wal-Mart, turn left (south) onto Leonard Springs Road. Leonard Springs Road will curve to the right and become Leonard Springs Road West. About a half mile after the curve, turn left (south) onto Leonard Springs Road South. Approximately one-quarter of a mile down, turn left (east) into the park's parking lot.

Note: If you have a large, group, you may want to consider carpooling. The parking lot is small and holds about seven mid-sized vehicles.

Environmental Education

Leonard Springs Nature Park offers many opportunities to learn more about our unique environment.

For example, we have a variety of offerings that appear in our seasonal program guide—winter/spring, summer, and fall/winter.

Please watch for them there and also in local media.

We can also do specially designed tours and programs.

For more information, contact
Bloomington Parks and Recreation
at (812) 349-3700 or
bloomington.in.gov/parks.

We hope to hear from you!

A few environmental education programs include:

- Educational tours of the park—including learning more about caves and karst, creeks, wetlands, birds and other animals such as bats, wildflowers and other plants and trees, mushrooms, and more.
- Hoosier Riverwatch and water quality monitoring of streams.
- Leonard Springs Nature Days—hosting all 6th grade students in the area and treating them to karst, creek, wetland, soil, and forest stations.
- Activities from Project Underground, a national cave and karst education program.



Leonard Springs Nature Park

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Leonard Springs Nature Park

Introduction

Leonard Springs Nature Park is an 85-acre park situated just minutes southwest of Bloomington. It is an ideal setting for passive recreation, making it welcome to those who enjoy walking along its quiet trails, observing the flora and fauna as well as caves and related features along the way.



What will you see when you visit? Among the sites unique to Monroe County—caves, springs, streams, a wetland, and a good diversity of flora and fauna in the woods and fields surrounding the former reservoir site.

The park is situated in a karst area, it is underlain by limestone rock.

There is an approximately one-mile loop trail that takes you 180' down from the ridge to reservoir-level and back up again.

Along its path, there are interpretive signs that will inform you of various features—caves, wetlands, reservoir history, and more.

Restrooms are located at the end of the service drive.

The following pages will add to your knowledge of the area.

Please note we do ask that a few simple rules be followed. They are described on the following pages.

Be sure to come back to watch the park as it changes throughout our four seasons!

Note: This self-guided tour booklet is available online at: www.bloomington.in.gov/parks

(Cover photographs: 1. Recent photo of Shirley Springs Waterfall taken, May 2001; 2. Historic photo of Shirley Springs Waterfall, taken circa 1915, courtesy Monroe County History Center).

Additional information: Do you live in a *watershed*? Yes... We all do! Watersheds are defined as areas of land confined by a drainage basin. That is, if you stand in the middle of a ridge, and a drop of water falls and rolls down the hill to one side, it will be in that particular area's drainage basin, or watershed; whereas if a drop of water falls and rolls down the other side of the hill, that drop of water will be in that particular area's drainage basin, or watershed.



In Bloomington, rain falling on the south side of town will end up flowing to the south and west. From where you are standing, water will flow from the creek leaving the old reservoir to Salt Creek, to the East Fork of the White River, to the Wabash River, to the Ohio River, and then head south once it joins the Mississippi River. What we do here affects all areas along the way, including the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. Please be careful with how you treat your watershed. Do not pollute it.

For more information on watersheds and area reservoirs, visit the following Web sites:

Center for Watershed Protection, cwp.org

City of Bloomington Utilities, bloomington.in.gov/utilities

On your way back up the hillside... Turn right at the "T" intersection and follow the switchbacks. Take a break at the "plaza" and continue on to the restrooms which are at the end of the service road and continue along the road to the start of the trail or take the trail to your left, just before the "plaza". Along the way, be sure to watch for fossils, chert nodules, and mushrooms during the warmer months of the year.

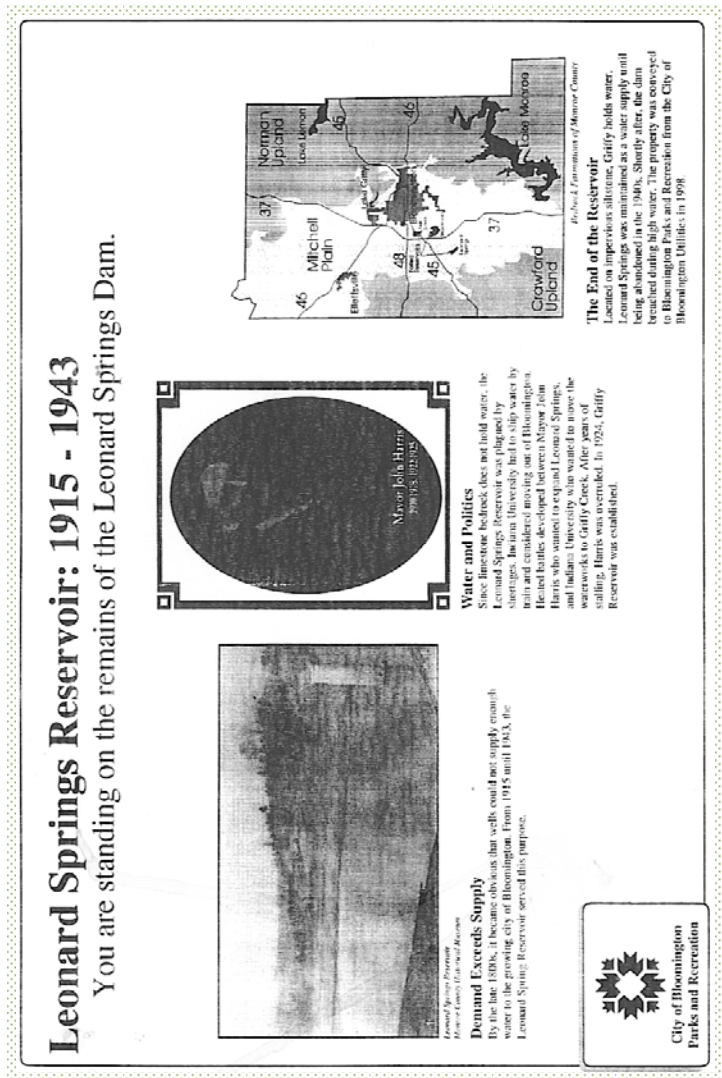


Leonard Springs Nature Park

Interpretive Signs

“Leonard Springs Reservoir: 1915—1943”

Please take time to read the interpretive sign!



Interpretive sign #5

Leonard Springs Nature Park

Timeline

Leonard Springs Nature Park was...

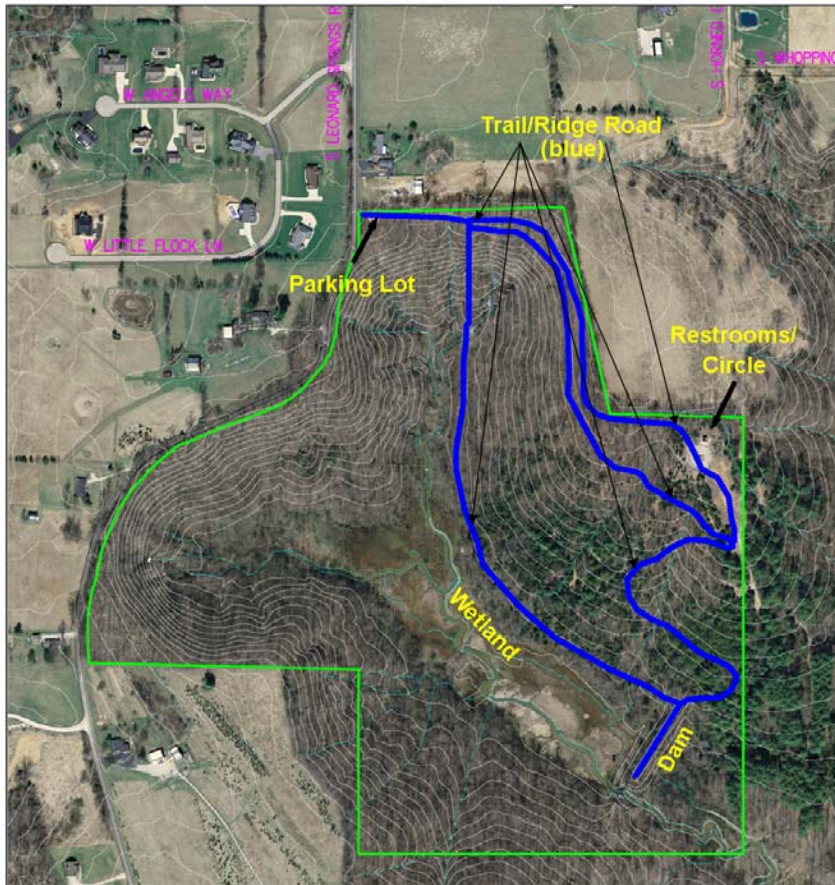
- Acquired by the City between 1914—1917
- Used as an active reservoir between 1915—1943
- Acquired by Bloomington Parks and Recreation in 1998
- Dedicated as a park on October 18, 1999



See also: [The Herald-Times](#) articles of October 19, 1999, “Nature in charge of new park” and “Celebrating nature”, September 28, 2008, www.heraldtimesonline.com.

Leonard Springs Nature Park

Trail Map/Trail Blazes



Trail Blazes. The trail is “marked” with blazes, or white rectangles, roughly six inches long and two inches wide, in order to help show you where the trail is located. The path of the trail may be obvious in the summer, but once the leaves and/or snow fall, it can become obscure!



Additional information: Wetlands are nature’s sponges. They help filter water. From 1915 to 1943, a man-made dam held the water back. Now, what’s doing it? Take a look to the left. Nature’s engineers have built a dam of sticks and mud.

For more information on wetlands and stormwater, in general, visit the following Web sites:

Indiana Department of Environmental Management,
wetlands.in.gov

Monroe County, Indiana stormwater quality,
co.monroe.in.us/stormwaterquality

On your way to the next interpretive sign... try walking in silence and paying attention to the sounds you hear around you. Stroll without talking for a minute or so, then discuss what you heard. You may be amazed! The call of birds and frogs, wind in the trees, the hum of engines, and even your own footsteps may fill the air.

You will soon come to a “T” intersection, turn to the right to walk along the dam, peeking at the reservoir on your right as you continue along to the next interpretive sign.

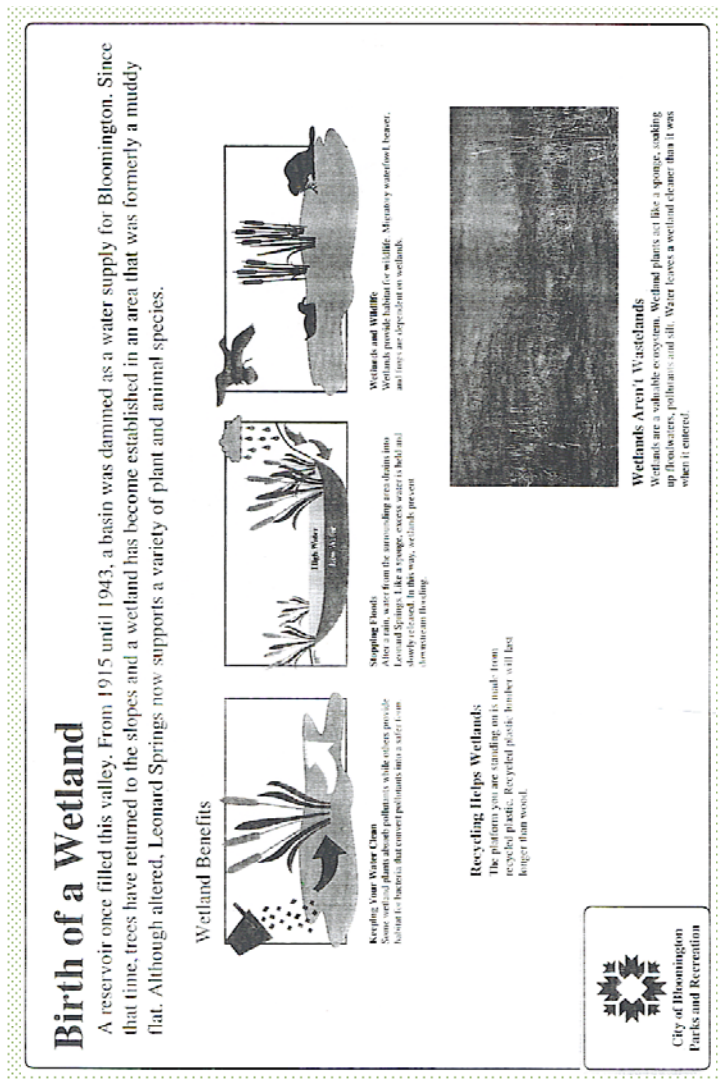


Leonard Springs Nature Park

Interpretive Signs

"Birth of a Wetland"

Please take time to read the interpretive sign!



Leonard Springs Nature Park

Benefits of Walking



Walking can ...

Elevate mood


Relieve pain

Lengthen lifespan


Improve sleep

Reduce risk of disease

STRENGTHEN
... bones
... joints
... muscles

Lower stress levels

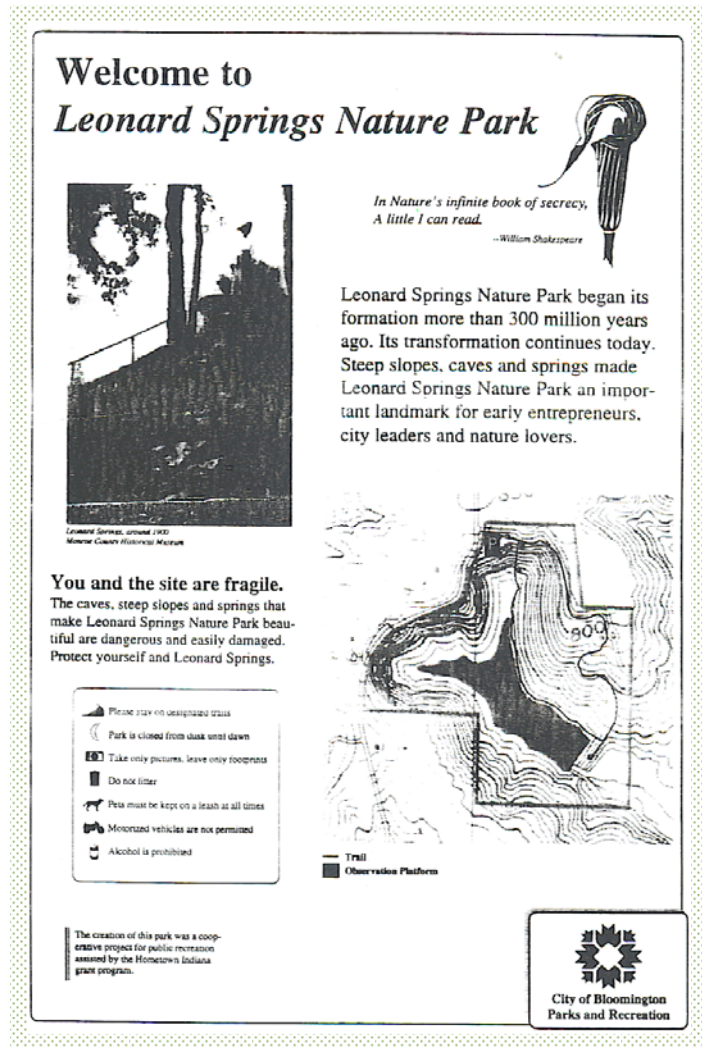
For more information on healthy living, call the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Health & Wellness Coordinator at 349-3771 or e-mail buuckl@bloomington.in.gov.

Leonard Springs Nature Park

Interpretive Signs

“Welcome to Leonard Springs Nature Park”

Please take time to read the interpretive signage and enjoy the park!



Interpretive sign #1

Additional information: You are standing in front of Shirley Springs. As the sign mentions, this water likely has started traveling underground from a few miles away before it resurfaced here. Along the way, it may have encountered a few pollutants, but it is still beautiful. Back in the mid-late 1800's, the Shirley family lived nearby and used the stream for mill sites. Remnants of mill foundations can be seen just above Shirley Springs Waterfall and beyond.

For more information on karst features, visit the following Web sites:

National Speleological Society, caves.org

Indiana Karst Conservancy,
caves.org/conservancy/ikc

Project Underground, projectunderground.org

Indiana Geological Survey, igs.indiana.edu

On your way to the next interpretive sign... stop to observe Shirley Springs Waterfall (the cover images show a “now and then” look over time of the waterfall). You will soon walk over a bridge that crosses the stream that leads from the spring. The trail will continue to the next interpretive sign at the wetland overlook. Note other historic stone structures along the way.



A historic photo of an old structure on the property. Could this be one of the mills? Courtesy Monroe County History Center



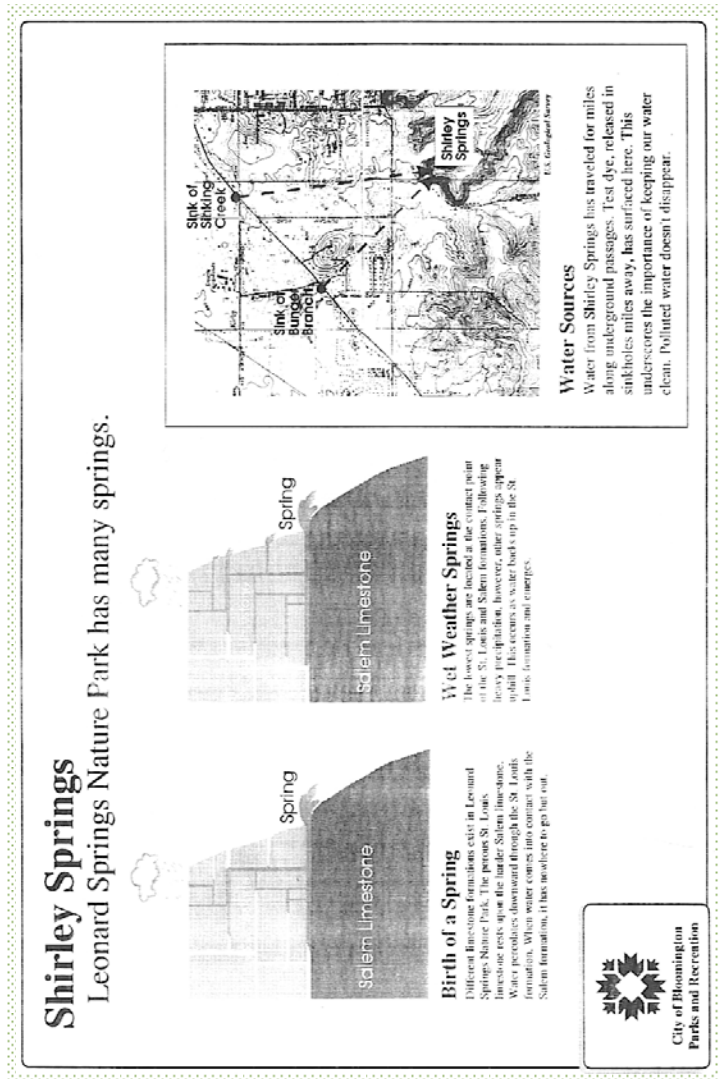
Green dragon
(*Arisaema dracontium*)

Leonard Springs Nature Park

Interpretive Signs

“Shirley Springs”

Please take time to read the interpretive sign!



Interpretive sign #3

Additional information: Leonard Springs Nature Park offers many beautiful views of caves and other sensitive karst features, including sinkholes and springs as well as associated springs and a wetland, surrounded by a maturing forest.

The rules are for your protection, as well as the park's.

You are entering the home of a diverse collection of flora and fauna.

Please do not collect natural items from the park, they are best left for all to enjoy.

For more information on area geology and good stewardship practices, visit the following Web sites:

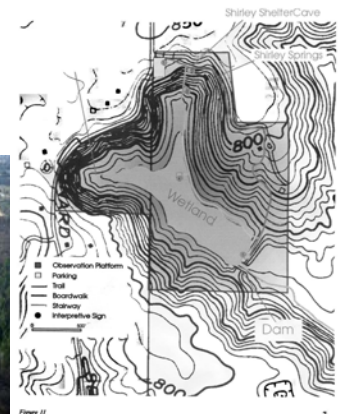
Indiana Geological Survey, igs.indiana.edu

Leave No Trace, Int.org

On your way to the next interpretive sign... View Shirley Springs Cave on the left, just across from the trailhead. Remember to stay behind the fence for safety's sake! In the winter, you can occasionally see the cave “breathe”, warm moist air flowing out of the entrance and turning to steam in the cool air. Afterwards, turn around and head down the trail to the right. Take the first right and slowly start down the stairway. Be sure to hold on with both hands.



Recent aerial photograph in relation to topographical map on right...

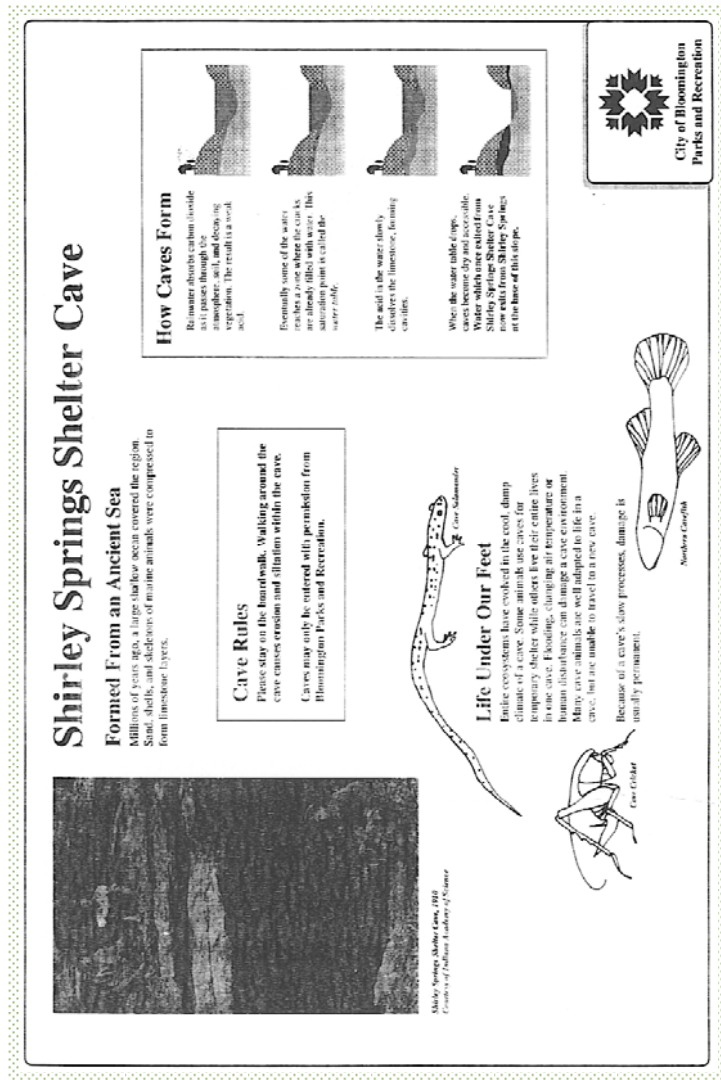
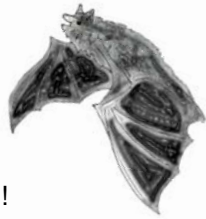


Leonard Springs Nature Park

Interpretive Signs

"Shirley Springs Shelter Cave"

Please take time to read the interpretive sign!



Interpretive sign #2

Additional information: You are standing in front of Shirley Springs Shelter Cave. There was a time when it was connected to Shirley Springs Cave, across the way, but a collapse has occurred. Caves are filled with many sensitive formations, flora, and fauna. The rules are in place to protect them as well as yourself. Please do not enter them without contacting the office at (812) 349-3700.

For more information on caves, visit the following Web sites:

National Speleological Society, caves.org

Indiana Karst Conservancy, caves.org/conservancy/ikc

Project Underground, projectunderground.org

"Caves: Life Beneath the Forest" a cave life documentary on the life of southcentral Indiana caves, cavebiota.com

On your way to the next interpretive sign... Walk slowly down the rest of the staircase (remember to hold on with both hands!). If it is winter and the leaves are off the trees, you will see Shirley Springs below you; if it is during the warmer months of the year, you may still be able to see parts of the spring through the foliage. No matter what time of year, you should be able to hear the spring! We have yet to see the spring stop running - it appears to continue, even in a drought...



An additional historic photograph of the cave entrance. Courtesy Monroe County History Center